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EDU 221

Dr. Grace

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My Essential Beliefs Statement

My parents both worked in law enforcement, so I had a sense of "right and wrong" instilled in me at a very young age. In the same token, neither of my parents graduated from college, but wanted better for me. I was taught that intelligence was *incredibly* important, and that above all else, you need to try your hardest. With these thoughts in my head I set out into the world looking for people who I felt embodied these virtues. As I walked into my kindergarten classroom, I knew that a teacher was all of those things. They were exactly who I wanted to be.

When I look back I see very clearly that it was my English teachers who had the greatest effect on me. I liked that a lot of their classes were not an exact science, and that you could really express yourself with creative writing and such. I would have to say that it was my middle school English teachers who were my favorites. This is probably because I had to deal with a lot of hard things in that time, including my mother being diagnosed with a brain tumor, and the death of a favorite educator. I mean, with all the hormones and middle school drama, life was hard enough! But I felt that their classes, these teachers, really pulled me through, allowing me to escape into different worlds, create my own, and be focused on something else that I enjoyed, just to get my mind off of things. I would love to be able to provide the same thing for someone else.

I think middle school gets brushed off as a sort of "in-between" island of time, but in my opinion, it is a period of great metamorphosis where you begin to get your footing for the rest of your life. I believe that English and writing especially are great outlets for all of the frustrations

Olsen 2

as well as happiness that occurs during this time of growing-up, and I would love to share this as an option. I feel that because middle school students are not quite as jaded as their high school counterparts, that they are still willing to learn about, and could even learn to love the subject.

I am pretty literary-based— words are definitely my favorite thing in the world because they hold so much power within them. That said, music has always been a large part of my life, and I feel very passionately about it as well. Because of this, it is likely that I will be more drawn to and be more likely to investigate musical and literary forms of teaching, such as finding songs about books, or articles on authors lives. While I may more easily incorporate these traits and abilities into my teaching, I will be careful not to let them overpower a curriculum that should be balanced and able to reach all of my students.

Teachers are incredibly brave people. Put a bunch of kids in a room, tell them they have to do something that they may not want to, and hope they do not start a mutiny? Like I said, they are my heroes. To be a teacher I expect to have to get a thick skin, but will still attempt to maintain a kind heart. I expect to be discouraged and uplifted in the same day. I expect to want to quit sometimes, and I expect to meet students who will inspire me, teaching me more than I could ever teach them. But I know it is not all apples and smiling faces, sometimes it is *tough*. I am worried that I will disappoint myself by not reaching my students in the way I had hoped, and that they will not care about the curriculum at all. I have had nightmares that I would teach a subject and that none of my students would leave my classroom understanding it. Then there is one of my more vain fears, which is that I will not be able to strike a good balance between being respected and being liked, because let's face it, we would like both.

Olsen 3

I hope to change and learn a lot throughout the process of this education course. I know I can be a bit short-sighted when it comes to planning, sometimes I have a hard time conceptualizing time and I have never been the most organized person in general either. I assume that all of these skills will be tested and strengthened, and many of my difficulties will be faced and dealt with through this course. Though it will be hard, I am glad to do as much as I must to improve where I lack, as I know these skills are essential to my success as a teacher.